

RESOLUTION 41-2007

A RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THAT THE MONTANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, ACT IN A MANNER TO STRENGTHEN MONTANA'S ECONOMY BY SUPPORTING A STRONG INTERNATIONAL TRADE POSTURE AND EFFECTIVE NATIONAL TRADE POLICIES FOR THE BENEFIT AND GROWTH OF MONTANA AGRICULTURE, TIMBER AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES; TO ENSURE THAT INTERNATIONAL TRADING PARTNERS ARE HELD TO THE SAME STANDARDS TO WHICH AMERICAN COMPANIES ADHERE, AND TO TAKE SWIFT AND RESPONSIVE ACTIONS TO HALT UNLAWFUL BARRIERS TO FAIR AND FREE TRADE

WHEREAS, Montana's manufactured goods, timber products and agriculture commodities and products compete with those produced around the world; and

WHEREAS, Montana workers, farmers and ranchers are in direct competition with producers whose governments on occasion erect unfair trade barriers to Montana products while flooding our markets with products that are illegally and unfairly subsidized and benefit from currency manipulation; and

WHEREAS, Montana beef exports have been hampered by false and protracted concerns regarding Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, creating unwarranted and lingering barriers to the marketing of the state's beef; and

WHEREAS, Montana softwood lumber products have competed with imports that benefit from direct government ownership and control, resulting in the ongoing threat of layoffs to Montana workers; and

WHEREAS, existing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements result in protracted and counterproductive proceedings to resolve trade disputes, causing long-term economic harm to Montana's workers, farmers and ranchers while trade issues are resolved; and

WHEREAS, United States trade policies continue to result in the erosion of the nation's manufacturing base, with more than 3.5 million jobs lost in the past decade; and

WHEREAS, Montana's manufacturing workers earn an average wage of more than \$44,000 compared to the overall average wage of approximately \$29,000; and

WHEREAS Montana's manufacturing sector is relatively small and declining, currently

employing about 21,000 people compared with 22,800 in 1999; and

WHEREAS, the United States trade deficit in 2006 reached an all-time record for the fifth consecutive year, exceeding \$763 billion, eroding our financial and national security;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners: That the County of Jefferson, on behalf of the citizens and business of Montana by this resolution, encourage the Montana General Assembly and the Congressional Delegation of Montana to stake a strong position on behalf of fair and free trade, and against such unfair trade practices as currency manipulation, subsidies of foreign exports to American markets and the erection of unwarranted barriers to American exports of goods and services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Montana welcomes the challenges of a global economy, provided that trade agreements are enforced equitably and that trade conflicts are resolved fairly and quickly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners urges citizens of Jefferson County to support strong trade policy and act in a manner that can best help preserve, protect and defend the vital jobs and products of Jefferson County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be send to Ambassador Susan Schwab, United States Trade Representative, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Montana Congressional Delegation.

DATED this 11th day of December, 2007.

ATTEST:

BONNIE RAMEY
CLERK AND RECORDER

KEN WEBER, CHAIR

TOMAS E. LYTHGOE, COMMISSIONER

CHUCK NOTBOHM, COMMISSIONER